The Iron Man in Industry

THE IRON MAN IN INDUSTRY. By Arthur Pound. Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press.

EVER since the publication of Samuel Butler's famous satire on machines writers have been busy pointing out that the mechanical development of society is by no means an unmitigated blessing, and that the very contrivances which make for industrial efficiency may harbor germs that threaten the destruction of civilization itself. For several generations the problem has been growing in scope and importance and of late years it has been greatly complicated by the rise of the automatic machine, a device that has tended to make the worker a close cousin to the automaton.

The menace of the automatic machine, as well as its boundless potentialities for good, are discussed with breadth and discernment in Arthur Pound's volume "The Iron Man." "The automatic tool," predicts Mr. Pound, "will be the force behind most of our legislation for the next fifty years, just as it will be the mainspring of our educational program once its significance is understood by educators still fumbling for the key to modern life." For whether we realize it or not the automatic tool has revolutionized industry; it has virtually abolished the system of apprenticeship and has enabled our youths to earn a substantial wage with but a day or two of training; it has tended to equalize the pay of factory workers and to facilitate rapid migrations of labor from country to town and from town to country; it has standardized and systematized the task of the individual worker to an extent never before known and by the modesty of its demands upon the intellect it has tended to encourage dullness and even to place a premium upon mental deficiency.

Indeed, as Mr. Pound observes, modern industry presents the phenomenon of the dulling of the mind "on a scale unequaled in extent and to a degree unequaled in intensity by anything on record in history." Moreover, the automatic machine has interrupted the normal course of evolution by making the moron or even the imbecile better fitted for instead of being eliminated in the factory work than the man of normal intellect, and the result is that, struggle, the defective is aided to survive and to propagate his kind, with consequences that may be seriously detrimental to the race as a whole.

In the case of the moron Mr. Pound sees no remedy except in measures tending toward family limitation. But with regard to the man of normal intellect the author believes that the only solution lies in the direction of a more thoroughgoing education, of an "education for leisure," a cultural development more or less in accordance with early Victorian ideals. Such education for leisure, "under the conditions of automatic production, is education for life." For the attendant of automatic tools "does not live while he is on the job"; but in the leisure provided him by the automatic tool he has ample opportunity for living, and it is for education to say whether he shall make his spare time an asset to the community and to himself or a liability tending to drag down the path of degradation.

The Story of Sergeant York

SERGEANT YORK AND HIS PEOPLE. By Sam K. Cowan. Funk & Wagnalls Company.

THE author of this prose epic of the Tennessee mountains has been at great pains not to make a war story, but "the tale of the making of a man."

The single handed exploit of Sergt. Alvin C. York of Pall Mall in the Appalachian Mountains in Tennessee in silencing thirty-five German machine guns and making 132 prisoners, three of them officers, besides killing twenty-five Germans, that morning in the Argonne forest, is one of those vivid patches of color which stand out in bold relief against the smoke stained and lurid Background of the great war. When Marshal Foch pinned upon his breast the Croix de Guerre with palm, he said to him: "What you did was the greatest thing accomplished by any private soldier of all the armies of Europe." Gen. Pershing, decorating him with the Congressional Medal of Honor—which is the highest award for valor the United States bestows—called him "the greatest civilian soldier of the war."

This young mountaineer came of a line of woodsmen who, as the author says, are "the transplanted colonists of the eighteenth century; the backwoodsmen of the days of Andrew Jackson; their life has the genuineness and simplicity of the pioneers. It has been said of the residents of the Cumberland Mountains that they are the purest Anglo-Saxons to be found to-day and not even England can produce so clear a strain.

"The mountain families have intermarried and, because of the inaccessibility of their homes, have remained marooned in the mountain fastnesses. They are Anglo-Saxons in their blood and customs; they are Colonial Americans in their speech and credences.

One of the most terrible tragedies of what the Indians called "the dark and bloody ground"—Kentucky—which included at one period the valley (now in Tennessee) where old Conrad settled, was part of the tradition in the families from which Alvin York came. The tragic history of William Brooks, from Michigan, and of his wife, who was born Nancy Pile, was one of the reverberations of the civil war among the Cumberland Mountains. Brooks was horribly murdered to avenge the death of Preston Huff, the desperado, and his wife came back from the North, where she had fled with her baby girl, and ended her life with her own people in the valley. And at the age of 15 this baby girl, grown to be Mary Brooks, who had the piquancy and wit that had made her mother the belle of the valley, married William York, the son of Uriah York. A home was built for them beyond the branch, beside the old spring, where old Conrad made his first camp in the Valley of the Three Forks o' the Wolf," and Alvin York was their third son.

The marksmanship of these mountaineers is renowned; Sergeant York set its quality upon a pedestal so high that all the world knows about it now. And the unerring skill, which enabled him to do his marvelous execution upon the Germans, who trained their magazine guns upon him and his companions on that October morning in 1919, was gained and perfected at the "turkey shoots" upon the hillsides near his home. The first "warming up" matches were shot at 150 yards, but then we read:

"The second turkey shoot was held at the forty yard range. The bird was tethered behind a log, so that only his head and red wattles could appear. Here, too, the turkey had freedom of motion, and had self determination as to how he should turn his head in wonder at the assemblage of men before him; or, if he should elect, he could disappear entirely behind the log if he found something that interested him on the ground near by, and the marksmen must wait for the untimed appearance of his bobbing head. It took prompt action and a quick hand to score a hit.

"And it was years afterward, after Alvin York had become the most expert rifle shot that those mountains had ever held, that he sat in the brush at the slope of a hill in the Forest of Argonne and watched for German helmets and German heads to bob above their pits and around trees—just forty yards away."

In another part of his book the historian recounts how Alvin York watched his chance:

"More cautiously German heads began to rise above their pits. York moved his rifle deliberately along the line, knocking back those heads that were more venturesome. The American rifle shoots five times, and a clip was gone before the Germans realized that the fire upon them was coming from one point.

"They centered on that point. Around York the ground was torn up. Mud from the plowing bullets besmirched him. The brush was mowed away above his head and on either side of him, and leaves and twigs fell all over him. But they could only shoot at him. They had no chance to take deliberate aim. As they turned the clumsy barrel of a machine gun down at the fire sparking point on the hillside a German would raise his head above his pit to sight it. Instantly backward along that machine gun barrel would come an American bullet, crashing into the head of the Boche who manned the gun. The prisoners on the ground squirmed under the fire that was passing over them. Their bodies were in tortuous motion; but York held them there; it made the gunners keep their fire high."

The officers recall his quaint and memorable answer to the inquiry on the tactics he used to defend himself against the Boches who were in the gunpits, shooting at him from behind trees and crawling for him through the brush. His method was simple and effective:

"When I seed a German I jes' tetched him off."

One of the most interesting details of Mr. Cowan's narrative is the detailed account of how Sergt. York, before he enlisted, had to persuade himself that the battle was not only just but a righteous fight, and that he wanted to go and fight. He had joined the church in the valley some years before the war and was a devout man in daily life. At the first call he hesitated, after several days spent in reading his Bible and prayer he made his decision. He was engaged to a young girl of the village and his mother needed him at home. But he made no plea for exemption.

The Blocking of Zeebrugge

THE BLOCKING OF ZEEBRUGGE. By Capt. Alfred F. B. Carpenter, V. C., R. N. Houghton Mifflin Company.

HUNDREDS of Americans must have heard Capt. Carpenter, who commanded the Vindicative in the famous attack on the Mole at Zeebrugge on the night of April 22-23, 1918, deliver his entertaining lecture on that enterprise when he made a tour of this country a few years since, with its always thrilling moment when he shook out the British ensign that flew from the Vindicative in that operation. And most of them will recall his joke about the Mole being the biggest thing of its kind in the world and that about the difference between the American and British pronunciation of the word "schedule."

His spoken narrative "went big," in the phrase of the theater, and its success emboldened Capt. Carpenter to write it out, at somewhat greater length and his text is now published in book form where it is just as entertaining as it was when this reviewer heard him deliver it before a wildly enthusiastic audience one night at the Century Theater. In its essentials the text is the same as that in his speech, with some of its details amplified and the "schedule" joke deleted. The work is divided into two parts, the first detailing the strategical reasons for attempting the blocking of Zeebrugge, the inception of the plan—which was conceived and worked out in the British Admiralty, as he explains in justice to that much abused institution—and the extraordinary mass of detail that had to be worked out to make the operation work according to a program more accurately timed than any railway train running schedule. The second part tells the actual carrying out of the operation, after two attempts that had to be called off—a narrative that thrilled the allied world when it learned of the success of the enterprise on the following day.

It is not for new material that this volume will be read and remembered. It is for its personal interest and the simple, sailorlike fashion with which it is told that this narrative will be enjoyed and treasured. One fact is brought out by Capt. Carpenter, however, that we do not recall seeing before in any book describing this blocking operation. This is that it is the first attempt of its kind known to naval history that was successful. And the list of such attempts includes the attacks on Martinique in 1794, on Teneriffe in 1797, on Ostende in 1798, the cutting out of the Hermione from Puerto Cabello in 1799, the sinking of the Merrimac by Hobson in 1898, the Japanese attempts to block Port Arthur in 1904, and the attempt to block the Rufigi River in 1914.

After reading the multitude of elements entering into this plan, the weighing of each one of them for and against, the enormous mass of details that had to be worked out as a preparation for it, the fleet (consisting of 162 vessels of all kinds) involved, one may well wonder if any or all the amateur naval strategists who kept insisting this plan should be tried ever had the faintest conception of what it meant to carry through the scheme they so glibly proposed. If any such chance to read this book they will probably feel secretly ashamed at their brashness in advocating a scheme they were so obviously ill prepared to face as an actual task. As an object lesson in the importance of thorough preparation for carrying out any plan Capt. Carpenter's narrative speaks for itself in every line.

Edward H. Harriman, Master of Railroads

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pears to have been the awakening cause of his interest in this field of human endeavor. The more he studied the construction and operation of railroads the more clearly he realized that improvements beneficial to their owners must also be advantageous to the great public whom the railroads are designed to serve, and this view absolves him from purely selfish purposes in his ambition to become a master of railroads, for in serving himself he also served the whole world of travel and transportation. His success in devising and carrying out great works of reconstruction and improvement on his railroads is all the more remarkable when we consider his lack of any special education or experience to develop such natural aptitude as he may have possessed for engineering enterprises. So far from there being any element of selfishness discernible in his later works, it would seem that in the damming of the Colorado River he spent millions of dollars, the expenditure of which was beneficial to his corporations only in the sense that it was beneficial to the public generally.

Edward H. Harriman was an intensive thinker rather than a great reader of books. He pondered long upon the problems which interested him; he observed and studied with extreme care the facts necessary to a correct conclusion, and having reached that conclusion he was so confident of its correctness that he pursued the course which it indicated regardless of the doubts or objections of others. This habit gave him a reputation for austerity of manner and intellectual arrogance at variance with the kindly character known to his more intimate friends. In his social relations with them he was anything but austere; he was a genial lover of nature, as was evidenced by the purchase and development of his immense wooded estate at Arden, in Orange county; and his interest in science was so strong as to lead him to combine genuine scientific research with recreation in the expedition to Alaska, which was his vacation in 1899, and is described in the seventh chapter of this memoir. The narrative of this Alaskan trip shows how much he resembled Roosevelt in his taste for outdoor life and sport, and makes it easy to understand the original friendliness between them which ended so unfortunately. John Muir, who was one of his guests on this expedition, quotes Mr. Harriman as having said to him one evening when the use of great wealth had been a subject at dinner:

> I never cared for money except as power for work. I was always lucky and my friends and neighbors, observing my luck, brought their money to me to invest, and in this way I have come to handle large sums. What I most enjoy is the power of creation, getting into partnership with Nature in doing good, helping to feed man and beast and making everybody and everything a little better and happier.

Mr. Kennan's two volumes furnish convincing proof of the truth of this explanation by Mr. Harriman of his purpose in amassing wealth. It is to be regretted that he neglected to make that purpose more clearly and widely known during his lifetime. Otherwise more than ten years would not have elapsed before justice was done him by the recognition of what he did for those whom he served.

Only a portion of the interesting matter in an interesting memorial of an interesting man has been indicated in this article.

Twain and Grant's Memoirs

AN intimate account of the writing and publishing of the memoirs of Gen. Grant is given by Albert Bigelow Paine in his biography of Mark Twain: "The Success of 'Huck Finn,' though sufficiently important in itself, prepared the way for a publishing venture by the side of which it dwindled to small proportions. One night (it was early in November, 1884) when Cable and Clemens had finished a reading at Chickering Hall, Clemens, coming out into the wet blackness, happened to hear Richard Watson Gilder's voice say to some unseen companion: 'Do you know Gen. Grant has actually determined to write his memoirs and publish them. He has said so to-day, in so many words.' Of course Clemens was immediately interested. It was the thing he had proposed to Grant some three years previously, during his call that day with Howells concerning the Toronto consulship . . .

"Clemens was in the habit of calling on Grant, now and then, to smoke a cigar with him, and he dropped in next morning to find out just how far the book idea had developed and what were the plans of publication. He found the General and his son, Col. Fred Grant, discussing some memoranda, which turned out to be a proposition from the company for the book publication of his memoirs. Clemens asked to be allowed to look over the proposed terms, and when he had done so he said: 'General, it is clear that the people do not realize the importance—the commercial magnitude of your book. It is not strange that this is true, for they are comparatively new publishers and have had little or no experience with books of this class. The terms they propose indicate that they expect to sell five, possibly ten thousand copies. A book from your hand, telling the story of your life and battles, should sell not less than a quarter of a million, perhaps twice that sum. It should be sold only by subscription and you are entitled to double the royalty here proposed. Write to the American Publishing Company at Hartford and see what they will do for you.'

"But Grant demurred. He said that while no arrangements had been made with the company, he though it only fair and right that they should have the book on reasonable terms; certainly on terms no greater than he could obtain elsewhere. He said that all things being equal the book ought to go to the man who had first suggested it to him.

"Clemens spoke up: 'General, if that is so, it belongs to *me*.'

"No publishing enterprise of such vast moment had ever been undertaken, and no publishing event, before or since, ever received the amount of newspaper comment. The death of Grant so largely and so suddenly augmented the orders for his 'Memoirs' that it seemed impossible to get the first volume printed in time for the delivery, which had been promised for December 1. . . . In the end more than 300,000 sets of two volumes each were sold and between $420,000 and $450,000 was paid to Mrs. Grant. The first check of $200,000, drawn February 27, 1886, remains the largest single royalty check in history. Mark Twain's prophecy had been almost exactly verified."